



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Governor Signs Methamphetamine Cleanup Bills

SACRAMENTO---- Department of Toxic Substances Control Acting Director Leonard Robinson today announced that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed two bills that will lead to the development of cleanup standards for properties contaminated by the clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine.

The bills (Assembly Bill 1078-Keene, Liu and Senate Bill 536-Bowen) will be implemented by the California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA).

"With the signing of these bills into law, consistent statewide standards for interior property cleanup will be developed. DTSC responds to approximately 1,000 requests per year from local and state law enforcement agencies to remove chemicals and equipment used by illegal drug makers. These new laws will ensure that Californians re-entering these properties will be protected," said Robinson.

Under the new laws, DTSC, working in collaboration with OEHHA, will develop a health-based target cleanup standard and methods for the screening, identification, and removal of methamphetamine and related substances from contaminated properties. The interiors of properties can become contaminated by the cooking of methamphetamine; the contaminants adhere to all surfaces and are particularly difficult to remove from porous materials such as carpets and sheet rock. If not removed, these contaminants can pose serious health risks to occupants. Currently, standards for interior cleanup vary from county to county.

"The bills will ensure that the statewide standards for methamphetamine cleanups will be based on the same rigorous science used to develop California's highly regarded air- and water-quality standards. This is a major step forward in our efforts to protect public health from threats posed by illegal methamphetamine production," said OEHHA Director Dr. Joan Denton.

In addition to the cleanup standards, the new bills would require advance notice to potential buyers and renters of properties once used for the purposes of manufacturing methamphetamine. The bills include civil penalties that can be levied on a property owner who does not provide required disclosures or who violates an order issued by the local health officer prohibiting re-occupancy.

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Methamphetamine is a powerful central nervous system stimulant. The drug is made easily in clandestine laboratories with relatively inexpensive, over-the-counter ingredients. Each pound of methamphetamine produced leaves behind five to six pounds of toxic waste. Illegal lab operators often pour leftover chemicals and by-product sludge down household drains, storm drains, or directly onto the ground.

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The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.